

The DIAMOND CIPHER

By W.A. PHELON

A Baseball Romance

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Secret Service Chief Wilkins, puzzled over the theft of the Government's cipher, calls to his aid Detective Pinkwell. They think they have discovered a new cipher, when the office boy, Brockett, tells them it's "The Diamond Cipher" and starts for the ball park.

CHAPTER II—Brockett, Chula, Lon Kan, a Spaniard, Ramon Solano, a Cuban, together with some twenty other youngsters practice baseball playing until dark. One of Wilkins' stenographers is seen to pass a paper to mysterious stranger.

CHAPTER III—As outcome of Brockett's cipher, the ball player and Solano are engaged by government for mysterious mission. Yazimoto, mysterious Jap, calls on Brockett.

CHAPTER IV—Brockett falls into Yazimoto's trap, a fight follows, Brockett coming out on top; Messenger McKane coming to rescue.

CHAPTER V—McKane was bearer of the mysterious cipher; is also a ball player.

"Mr. Yazimoto, you have been misinformed. I cannot imagine where you gained your information, but it is wrong, completely wrong. I have no cipher for sale, and am sorry that I cannot oblige you."

Mr. Yazimoto sighed as he replaced the portly pocketbook.

"I am deeply sorry, Mr. Brockett, that you should lose the opportunity for enlargement of fortunes. Perhaps you will reconsider. Maybe I call upon you another time. I will bid you the honorable good evening."

The Japanese had hardly departed when Ramon Solano put in an appearance, much to the delight of the Brockett family, with whom the Cuban was a prime favorite. Greetings exchanged, the boys plunged promptly into the subject of mutual interest, Solano firing the first gun.

"No message yet from General Cole?"

"Not yet. Just had an odd call, though."

"The Jap we saw talking with that stenographer last night? I passed him as I came in. Curious thing; when I called to Havana this afternoon, he was beside me at the Western Union office, and loaned me an ink-pencil."

"He did? Was there anything specially important in the message?"

"Nothing at all aside from informing my father that I would take an extra month for my vacation, beginning now. Even if he could have read it—it was in Spanish, too—that wouldn't be of much value to him."

"Hardly. I am beginning to do some extensive thinking about that Jap, though. Listen to the proposition he made me ten minutes ago. And Brockett rapidly outlined the tempting offer made by Mr. Yazimoto."

"Something doing, sure," commented Solano. "I can see one thing clearly. He fancied that you would sell him a duplicate of your diamond cipher—though I cannot figure out how he could get in touch with that idea so quickly. Yes I can too. The stenographer! By the way, Harry, I forgot to tell you—I have seen that fellow chatting with this same Japanese two or three times. You remember that when we saw them together I was trying to recall some place, some occasion, when I had noticed one or both of them?"

"Looks as if we would have to watch out for Mr. Yazimoto. He may try some jiu jitsu tricks if he really wants to get that cipher."

"Quite likely, Harry. Do you know anything about jiu jitsu?"

"Only what I have read. I have always believed that a good American swing to the jaw would discount all the jiu jitsu in the world, and, if that wouldn't be enough, I learned a few wrestling tricks from an old grappler some months ago. Nevertheless, I will watch out for the Yazimoto man. He must mean trouble."

The bell rang, and Harry, eagerly responding, welcomed a sturdy, red-headed cherub of fifteen—Mike McKane, a well-liked, much-trusted department messenger, and an especial favorite with General Cole. The boy held, in a boa-constrictor clutch, a thick envelope, which he surrendered to Brockett with a grunt of satisfaction.

"The old man," explained the messenger, "told me to give this to you yourself, and nobody else. You didn't tell no Japanese guy to relay the letter to you, did you?"

"Why, no—not in a hundred years. What do you mean, Mickey?"

"Tell you just how it was, Harry. I'm just comin' up yer steps, when a Japanese guy stops me. 'Ah, boy,

says he, 'have you a message for Mr. Brockett? He has asked me to receive it for him.'

"He gits it himself, an' no one else can horn in," says I, an' hurried on quick. I thought he was goin' ter make a jump fer me, but mebbe I was mistaken. Anyhow, here's yer letter."

Brockett and Solano exchanged glances.

"This Japanese gentleman is certainly in search of trouble," exclaimed



Harry. "I'll look out of the front door and see if he is lingering around."

Brockett opened the door, and stepped out into the darkness. As he left the threshold, he noted, with surprise, that the city lamp which was supposed to burn directly in front of the building was unlighted. His eyes had not yet accustomed themselves to the unexpected gloom, when something seemed to snap and whirl in the wide of his head, his feet were struck from under him, and he sank in a helpless heap upon his own doorstep.

CHAPTER IV.

When Brockett's senses returned, his head was humming and buzzing, while strange, confused noises seemed to struggle with one another for the right to add extra discomfort to his dazed and throbbing brain. He pulled himself to his knees, and was immediately tumbled down again by the fall of some heavy body across his back. A vigorously kicking foot, attached to a squirming leg, caught him in the side, and helped to drive the dizziness away. A twisting mass, jerking and heaving spasmodically, caromed against him, upsetting him for the third time just as he was regaining his balance. Part of the mass came almost under his own face as he struck the wall, and, even in the darkness, he could recognize the features of Mr. Yazimoto, distorted with fury and with pain. Brockett reached over, clutched the throat of the little man with fast-returning strength, and strangled grimly, mercilessly, till the Japanese lay limp and motionless, all the fight choked out of him. Then a small, solid figure climbed off the legs of the prostrate prisoner, and scurried in the direction of the street-lamp. A moment later the light gleamed out in all its pristine radiance, giving the bewildered Brockett a chance to survey the scene of battle.

Mr. Yazimoto, very limp and very offensive, was stretched out under Brockett's knees. Ten feet away Ramon Solano was viciously kicking a man who was still fighting, although down and at an overpowering disadvantage. Evidently badly hurt, and hardly able to drag himself along the ground, this dauntless warrior was trying to crawl to closer quarters with the Cuban, who stepped lightly backward, waited till his victim came in range, and then drove his foot crashing into the body of his enemy. The small figure which had vanished towards the street-lamp reappeared, flung itself upon Solano's adversary and pinned him down. Aside from making captives of the beaten assailants, the fight was over.

Brockett and Solano tried to help

their prisoners to an upright position, but neither Mr. Yazimoto nor his ally seemed to have as much strength as a limp rag. Aided ably by Mike McKane—the small but active partisan in the recent struggle—the boys managed to drag the captives inside the parlor, and placed them side by side upon a sofa. Mrs. Brockett and Bertha, after assuring themselves that none of the three champions had received serious injury, sat fluttering and wide-eyed near the door, while Brockett interrogated the badly damaged Yazimoto.

"Seems to me, Mr. Yazimoto," Brockett began, "that you owe me quite an explanation. What's the meaning of all this excitement, anyhow?"

Mr. Yazimoto looked up at his jailer, and then at his fellow-captive—a dark little man, as plainly Oriental as Yazimoto himself, but as plainly neither a Japanese nor a Chinaman. Then a smile, a really pleasant, amiable smile, overspread his bruised visage.

"I make mistake, Mr. Brockett. Most unfortunate error. I plan honorably well, but this boy, this small fellow, disarrange plans excellently executed."

"Surest thing you know, pal," approved Mike McKane, gleefully. "I'm the disarranging kid when I get started."

"I had suppose," Mr. Yazimoto went on, "that there was excellent chance that you might step from doorway during evening. You did so, with exactitude. With the honorable assistance of my friend—we not hesitate to mention his name—I strike you, not serious, not with brutality. There was not, I honorably assure you, the desire to kill or cause most unfortunate inconvenience. I trust you will accord me the honor of frank belief?"

"Why, with pleasure, Mr. Yazimoto," laughed Brockett. "Go on with your story."

Mr. Yazimoto smiled amicably again. "I take, as you say in honorable discourse, the long chance. Also I do—I hear your colleagues speak thus—the rough stuff that I may accomplish the honorable purpose. You understand, I have nothing of doubt, my wish. I must accomplish what I am required to do."

"I understand you perfectly, Mr. Yazimoto. You wanted to get certain documents from my pocket, and thought they would doubtless be in that pocket when I stepped out into the dark."

"You speak of perfect knowledge, Mr. Brockett. So we make you in the unconscious condition, using no force greater than essential. But before we can take what we required from your pockets, we are attacked. We are overpowered. I, myself, am expert in the jiu jitsu, but while I am occupied seeking for your pocket this boy, this young Samurai, for he most honorably great as a fighting man, spring upon me, seize me by the ankles, and throw me prostrate, so that the jiu jitsu cannot aid me."

Mike McKane gurgled gleefully.

"That's one trick you overlooked, Mr. Yazzy," he chuckled. "You get a guy round the ankles, an' give him one jerk—why, say, a baby could throw Jack Johnson! One kid in New York did sling Jack Johnson that way, a little newsboy—aw, say, 'scuse me, Harry. I'm hornin' in on yer game."

Mr. Yazimoto eyed the stocky messenger, not at all resentfully.

"It was honorably so, as the boy explain. I shall remember that attack—some time I may make estimable use of it. I am thrown down with this assault of the boy, Mr. Brockett—then you return to sensibleness, and I am with great speediness defeated."

"How about your friend, Mr. Yazimoto?" put in Solano. "He didn't seem to have any jiu jitsu ready for me. I followed Mickey through the door; your partner tried to stop me, and one good kick brought him down in a heap. Couldn't you have picked a better helper?"

Mr. Yazimoto looked rather ruefully upon his associate, who had not opened his mouth since entering the house, and was simply nursing his bruises.

"My friend," said the Japanese, "is not what you would say of expertness in personal encounter. With the bold, possibly, he is so admirably well, but he has not of sufficient skill for honorable battle."

"He's no Jap, all right," commented Mike McKane, studying the silent prisoner.

"No. Not of Nippon," exclaimed Mr. Yazimoto. "He is of long, long duration my friend, however, and for many reasons he is in accompaniment with me this evening."

"Filipino, I should judge," remarked Solano. "Let me talk to him." The Cuban spoke briefly but emphatically in Spanish, and the prisoner returned a short and equally emphatic answer. Solano looked somewhat crestfallen as he translated.

"He says," interpreted the Cuban youngster, "that he has no information to give me; that Mr. Yazimoto can do all the talking necessary, and that I am a renegade and a cog to be mixed up with Yankee pigs."

There was a general laugh, in which Mr. Yazimoto joined as heartily as anyone. Then the Japanese looked up at Brockett with a quizzical air.

"The explanations are honorably finished, Mr. Brockett. You have now the fullest comprehension of the com-



plete proceedings. It is now to ask—what shall you, being victorious, do with us, being honorably defeated?"

"I suppose," responded Brockett, "that we ought to have you run in. Still, that might cause unpleasant complications. I don't care to have the morning papers—and everyone who reads them—fully posted as to the reasons for your attack upon me, Mr. Yazimoto. On careful consideration of the whole affair, I am strongly tempted to let you go. Don't you think that would be best, Ramon?"

The Cuban gave unqualified assent.

"They didn't get what they were after, Harry, and they did get a trimming that they won't forget in a hurry. Let them be on their way, and in a hurry."

Brockett conducted his prisoners to the door, and dismissed them with a ceremonious bow.

"Good-night, Mr. Yazimoto. Come again."

The Filipino limped sullenly away, but Mr. Yazimoto turned, with a smile that illuminated his scarred face for an instant.

"Good-night, Mr. Brockett. You have been most honorably generous. It may be so, sometime, I have excellent opportunity to repay. Good-night."

CHAPTER V.

After the vanquished Orientals had departed, Brockett and Solano proceeded to investigate the thick envelope which Mike McKane had brought them. The messenger sat by—a wise little owl and a loyal one—while Mrs. Brockett and Bertha fluttered to and fro, still more or less excited by the events of the evening.

A packet of yellow-backed bills was first brought to light, and then a letter, penned in the firm hand of Chief Wilkins. Another sheet was next opened, revealing the handwriting of General Cole, which was not unfamiliar to young Brockett. Both boys were relieved and pleased to find that nothing typewritten had been sent them.

"No chance for any treachery there," remarked Solano, as Chief Wilkins' letter was placed upon the table. "If your stenographer counted on getting a copy of this particular document, she loses."

Brockett laughed light-heartedly, and then whistled in surprise. Excepting a few unimportant sentences at the beginning and the close of the letters, both were in his own cipher, and even the addresses upon two smaller envelopes folded between the sheets were in the same hieroglyphic script. Harry rapidly read through Chief Wilkins' letter, and found it to be as follows:

"TO TC A TC W TC BB A TO W E HR E 2BH WP TC Fin BB HR PO PO 2BH TC AB WP Pos L R HR W R Fin HR TO TC Fin L Pos W TC Fin TO SH Pos L R Pos E AB SH TO W Pos T SH PO SH BB BB HR TO 3BH HR E Boston BH Pos WP L TO TC W Pos E R 3BH TC E TC 2BH Pos PO BB 3BH SH W SH WP TC Fin BB HR PO PO SH HR E BH 2BH TC A SH SO SH L TO SH W Pos PO 2BH HR T SH 3BH HR A PO SH TO TO SH W PB R HR FA 3BH SH W BA SH WP AB W HR E 2BH W SH FA PO WP."

"Simple enough," remarked Brockett as he finished the letter. "Tomorrow morning, you will go by as circuitous a route as can be traveled within eight days to Rancho Nogal, where you will find Gomez Esteral. Give him letter and cipher key. Bring reply."

"Easily understood," commented Solano. "We can doubtless find Rancho Nogal on the maps, and we are to go there by as roundabout a road as possible—within a limited space of time. Reasons for the circuitous journey are easily seen. Our tropical friends, the little brown men, might be trailing us. What does the general say?"

"His letter is short and to the point," answered Brockett, spreading out the screed, worded in this fashion:

Tom:
"Pos TO SH PO FA Pos L TC 2BH HR T SH PO SH TO TO SH W PB BA SH WP TO TC R TC PO TC B SH PO PO SH BB 3BH L Brooklyn R Pos T pos PO W WP."

"At El Paso, give letter and key to Colonel Lewis, Sixth cavalry. Simple enough, but do we see the colonel on our way there, or coming back?"

"Probably left to our own judgment and convenience," answered Solano. "Now, then, let's locate Rancho Nogal."

To be continued

CHILILI

We had another big rain here Sunday and Monday.

People began to cut their wheat this week. Wheat crops are good this year, will produce about 20 to 30 bushels per acre. Corn oats and beans are looking fine, we will have big crops.

Another rain visited us Tuesday night and Wednesday so everything looks fine.

STATEMENT
FIREMAN'S FUND INSURANCE
COMPANY
San Francisco, California.
December 31, 1911

Assets	\$8,649,591.75
Liabilities	
including capital	\$6,068,131.23

The meeting of sheriffs at Albuquerque last week proved to be a meeting of county officers, there being more incumbents of other offices present than sheriffs. Sheriff Meyer and Dee Robinson, deputy, went over. Mr. Robinson's name appears in the printed list of those attending the meeting, but Sheriff Meyer's name is not in the list. The meeting adopted a schedule for first class county salaries and appointed a committee to confer with the governor and present the views of the meeting and urge a special session of the legislature.

The game warden's office is getting busy, and people who want to hunt and fish should take the precaution to procure a license. Sheriff Meyer has received a supply of blanks and is ready to accommodate you. General game wardens for this county are L. J. Putsch of Mountainair and John W. Collier, Estancia. Deputy game wardens and collectors—Manuel S. Sanchez, Estancia; Geo. Alters, Willard; Julius Meyer, Estancia; C. E. Davenport, Encino; J. A. Willis, Duran.

The "Cabbage Patch," by the way, we believe is beginning to justify the expense and work put in upon it. Practically every stranger who comes to town, looks at it and is impressed by what he sees with the possibilities of the country. Some cauliflower heads of very fine quality and weighing as high as five pounds and a little more have been cut, and Capt. Fornoff took one to Santa Fe the other day to show the people there what the Valley will produce. The produce taken from the patch is being sold and the proceeds turned into the fund, and doubtless the sales will assist materially in defraying the expense.

There are some unpaid bills for labor and material, due to the fact that some of the subscribers have neglected their payments. These bills should be paid, and then the money from the sale of produce could be disposed of according to the desires of the subscribers after the business is closed up in the fall.